several sectors e.g. steel, power, etc. The project team executing such projects/contracts includes some unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Details of foreign nationals, including Chinese nationals, working in various sectors in the country are not centrally maintained.

(c) Employment/Business Visas have been granted by the Indian Missions abroad to foreign nationals, including Chinese nationals, for executing projects/contracts in India on the basis of the documentation submitted by the visa applicant/foreign company regarding the award of the project/contract to the foreign company.

(d) and (e) It has come to the notice of the Government that a number of foreign nationals, including Chinese nationals, coming for execution of projects/ contracts in India have come on Business Visa instead of the Employment Visa. The matter has, therefore, been reviewed by the Government and it has been decided that henceforth Business Visa will be issued only to *banafide* businessmen who want to visit India to establish an industrial/business venture or to explore possibilities to set up industrial/business venture in India or who want to purchase/sell industrial products or commercial products or consumer durables etc. It has also been decided that all foreign nationals coming for execution of projects/contracts in India will have to come only on an Employment Visa and that such visa will be granted only to skilled and qualified professionals appointed at senior level, and will not be granted for jobs for which a large number of qualified Indians are available. Suitable instructions/guidelines have been issued to the Indian Missions abroad to effectively regulate Employment and Business Visa regimes and ensure that these are issued strictly as per prescribed norms. Persons who are already in India had been directed to exit by 31.10.2009 (extendable for a short period in respect of persons engaged in some strategic/sensitive projects) and, where permissible, seek re-entry on appropriate visa.

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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Adverse effect of FTA with ASEAN

†592. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with ASEAN;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government believes that this agreement will have a negative effect on Indian agriculture sector;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the details thereof and how Government is going to protect agriculture sector from these negative effects; and

(e) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India has signed Trade in Goods Agreement with ASEAN on 13th August, 2009. This Agreement is envisaged to come into force from 1st January, 2010.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Majority of the agriculture items are protected under the India-ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement by placing them in the Exclusion (Negative) List where no tariff concessions are available to ASEAN countries. A complete list of India's offer is available at http://commerce.gov.in/trade/international_ta_indasean.asp

Measures for export growth

593. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government is all for the transparency in process, accountability, simplification of process and correcting anomalies in legislation for exporters;

(b) if so, whether in a meeting of the Federation of Indian Exporters Organisation he had assured that Government will revive exports growth;

(c) whether exports decreased by 26 per cent in July and it is continuing to decrease for the last several months;

(d) if so, whether Government will call inter-State councils meeting; and

(e) the steps taken for import export growth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes Sir. Government monitors and reviews the policy and the procedure laid there-under, for simplification and transparency in its operation, on a continuous basis.

(b) and (c) Government is committed to revive the growth in exports. Due to significant impact of global economic slowdown and recession in our traditional export markets in developed countries, rate of growth in exports has been negative since October, 2008. In July, 2009, the decline was 28.4% in Dollar terms.

(d) Yes Sir. The Government proposes to hold a meeting of the Inter State Trade Council.